

EAST COAST MAINLINE AUTHORITIES (EMCA)

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Introduction

The Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) is a group of Councils, Combined Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships throughout the area served by the East Coast Main Line (ECML) who are working together on a cross party basis to secure economic growth and prosperity.

ECMA takes a holistic view of the ECML. So we are concerned about the rail connectivity of all seven cities in Scotland between themselves, to England and to the communities in between. We are committed to working with the rail industry to use their expertise in designing and operating the railway. Our chosen approach is to ask them to bring forward solutions to the economic outcomes that we have identified from our evidence.

Our evidence for economic growth

The Consortium commissioned specialist consultants, Albion Economics and JMP Consultants Limited to evaluate the potential for economic growth from an improved ECML. They found that there is a growth potential worth £5 billion (as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) from improving services on the ECML. This growth potential increases to £9 billion after the introduction of High Speed 2 services to Leeds, York, the North East and to Edinburgh (the annual potential benefit is £307m and £515m respectively).

These economic benefits are in addition to the transport benefits from each individual scheme required as well as employment, taxation income and social benefits.

We see a close fit between the outcome of further investment in the ECML as shown in our research and the Scottish Government's policies to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint, reduce traffic congestion and increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel through promoting sustainable economic activity. Further investment will improve connectivity, create jobs, help businesses thrive and ensure that all people can share in the economic well being of the country.

The methodology used in our research to understand the agglomeration and employment benefits from improving the ECML is consistent with that used by the Department for Transport and Network Rail. We discussed our approach with representatives from both organisations during the study period to ensure this consistency. The study used economic data, railway data and stakeholder opinion (including from the business community throughout the area served by the ECML) to generate the best scenario for enabling economic growth.

The detailed report containing the research may be found on our web page at www.york.gov.uk/ecma under the title "Prospectus for Investment in the East Coast Main Line". We have also prepared a **Manifesto Brochure** which is attached to this representation.

Representation

Our representation concerns the need for immediate further investment in the ECML within Scotland before 2019 to start to realise the potential for economic growth set out in our Prospectus. We acknowledge the funding already committed during 2014 to 2019, but further funding will accelerate the achievement of a transformed ECML with faster journey times, greater reliability, more line capacity, improved travelling conditions and the potential for future service enhancement for passengers using the East Coast network throughout Scotland. This will then create the conditions for the economic growth that we have identified, along with the consequential transport, employment, taxation and social benefits.

As above, our approach is to work with the rail industry to use their skill and expertise in formulating the solutions that are needed to achieve the outcomes. We note the proposals set out in the 2009 Strategic Transport Projects Review and call for their funding to be advanced so that the rail industry can deliver the specific schemes required as soon as is possible. The relevant proposals are:

- a. Further Electrification of the Strategic Rail Network to Aberdeen and Inverness.
- b. Rail enhancements on the Highland Main Line between Perth and Inverness,
- c. Rail enhancements between Aberdeen and the Central Belt
- d. Enhancing rail system capacity through targeted improvements, and
- e. Rail enhancements in the east of Scotland (including Dunbar Station works).

This request would necessitate the prioritisation of these projects within programmes of planned expenditure for future years, but would facilitate the earlier realisation of taxation, employment and social benefits within Scotland due to economic growth.

Looking beyond 2019, further investment in the ECML to deliver the improved standards of service set out in our Prospectus will deliver the potential for economic growth. We also call for investment in High Speed services to Scotland in such a way that improves the connectivity of economies along the East Coast in both England and Scotland. Such investment will build on both existing and emerging economic links, helping realise the higher potential economic growth benefit of £9 billion.

East Cost Mainline Authorities
31 October 2014